

which finally cleared the hurdle in Congress yesterday by passing the House, it is now only a Presidential signature away from becoming law. Soon—very soon—the most sweeping recovery effort in recent history will get underway.

Direct checks will be delivered to American families from coast to coast—roughly, 85 percent of all households. The American people can expect those \$1,400 checks for each person in the family to be delivered by the end of March, and we are making amazingly good progress on vaccines. Vaccines will be available far more quickly to far more people.

Just this morning, the Biden administration announced an expansion of the vaccine program, and I was able to announce that more than 100 community health centers in my home State of New York will be eligible to get their own, dedicated supply of vaccines. There is a brand new vaccine supercharge for New York and for some of the rest of the Nation as well—the crux: more vaccines and more sites to administer them. Over 100 sites will be set up across New York State to administer a massive influx of new shot supplies.

There is light at the end of this COVID tunnel, which has always been centered on access to a free vaccine for all New Yorkers. More access and more shots mean a quicker recovery, and that is what we want, and that is becoming available for my home State of New York and for the entire Nation.

The CHC sites, or community health center sites, will be federally funded and organized by the Department of Health and Human Services—a huge expansion. We have all heard numerous stories of people having to travel too far to get the vaccine, hampering our ability to recover and return to normal. With this announcement of more vaccines and more New York sites to administer them, New Yorkers have something to celebrate, and I thank the President for working with us to make this effort real and to bring it to every State in the Nation. Other things are happening, too.

Our schools will receive critical assistance to update their infrastructure, hire more teachers and tutors, and prepare to reopen as fast and as safely as possible.

There is going to be money for broadband. There are going to be dollars for rural hospitals. There are going to be dollars to help our Tribal nations—all who are suffering. The new RESTAURANTS Act, which is so important to so many of our States, is becoming law. More money for Save our Stages to help our arts institutions is coming.

Perhaps the thing that we are the most proud of—although there are so many in this bill—is helping people with their pensions and making sure those who are laid off still get healthcare by funding COBRA fully.

There are so many good things for average working families, but maybe

the most important of all—who knows? There are so many good things in this bill—is the child tax credit, which will cut childhood poverty in half. When a child is born into poverty at no fault of his or her own, they don't get adequate nutrition. They don't get adequate healthcare. They don't get adequate housing. They don't get adequate education. Then, when they get to young adulthood, they have nowhere to go, and then they get blamed for their plight. The better, smarter, more effective thing to do is to help them get out of poverty early so they can lead good, productive lives as citizens and as taxpayers. We are doing that for the first time here, and I hope it is something that we can continue.

Simply put, the American Rescue Plan is one of the most significant pieces of legislation to pass the Congress in recent history.

Yesterday, I started describing in more detail some of the lesser known aspects of the plan. Everyone knows that vaccines are coming, that \$1,400 checks are coming, that money for schools is coming, and now people know of the child tax credit, but there are lots of other things in this bill. Today, I want to continue by talking about another unheralded provision: assistance to Native communities. It is a topic very much on theme today given the nomination of Secretary HAALAND.

One of the most tragic features of the COVID-19 pandemic is how destructive it has been for America's Tribal nations. Native Americans have faced the highest risk of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths due to COVID-19—bar none, the highest. Early in the crisis, the Navajo Nation, to take one example, saw more cases per capita than any other State in the country. Decades of an unraveling social safety net, declining economic opportunity, an overburdened health system, and the failure of the Federal Government to honor its trust obligations to American Tribes left Native communities unequipped to handle the crisis. But in the American Rescue Plan, the Democrats will deliver the single largest investment in Native communities in our Nation's history. We are very proud of that. It is historic—the single largest investment in Native communities in our Nation's history. More than \$31.2 billion in direct funding will go to Tribes and communities to defeat this pandemic and rebuild their communities; \$20 billion directly to Tribal governments so they can stabilize essential services; \$6 billion to the Indian Health Service, not just for vaccines and testing and tracing but to improve and restore these rural, long-neglected hospitals; hundreds of millions more for Native education; \$10 million will go to just making sure communities can access clean water.

Listen to the items I just mentioned: clean water, keeping hospitals running, connecting kids to broadband. These are absolute necessities, and the Amer-

ican Rescue Plan is going to dedicate resources to all of them for Indian Country.

I want to thank a whole bunch of my colleagues. So many contributed, but the chair of the Indian Affairs Committee, Senator SCHATZ, and Senators TESTER and CANTWELL and SMITH and KELLY and BEN RAY LUJÁN and Heinrich are very, very important. Senator HEINRICH particularly pushed for broadband. So it was a team effort, and I am proud of my colleagues.

The American Rescue Plan takes us a giant step closer to fulfilling our trust responsibilities to all Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. This is just one example, an important one, as to how the rescue plan will dramatically improve the lives of millions of people in this great country of ours.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, a year ago, coronavirus cases were beginning to climb on U.S. soil. Shutdown measures were starting to take effect.

Americans have endured one of the strangest and most painful years in living memory. Nearly 2 million Americans have been hospitalized with serious cases of the virus. More than half a million have lost their lives. Millions of students and workers have had their lives completely thrown off course. But these dark times have also spotlighted some of the best of America: heroism, selflessness, ingenuity.

Last March, the night we passed the CARES Act without a single dissenting vote, I said we would see a new generation of American heroes, and so we have. Doctors and nurses and first responders have worked tirelessly to help their fellow Americans. Essential workers kept manning their posts and prevented economic collapse. Neighbors looked out for neighbors, and small businesses shifted gears almost overnight. Children and parents have fought to adapt to extraordinary disruptions, and incredible heroes in lab coats in America and worldwide worked at light speed to decode this new enemy and create lifesaving vaccines in record time.

Today, together, we are standing on the cusp of a new springtime for our